

REMARKS

This amendment is responsive to the Office Action of November 12, 2003.

In response to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, the Applicants have amended Claim 1 to read “whereby ribs adjacent to said one and only one rib having a central tip and a pair of barbs flex outwardly in said interlocking relationship, and are free of flexing inwardly into any of said first plurality of continuous grooves” (added language underlined, deleted language not shown). It is respectfully submitted that this is supported by Figures 2-5 wherein male ribs 44 and 52 are adjacent to rib 48 and male rib 44 can move upwardly and male rib 52 can move downwardly (both “upwardly” and “downwardly” refer to the orientation shown in the figures) thereby flexing outwardly without flexing inwardly into grooves 64 or 68.

In the Office Action, claims 1-4 of the present application were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by the Tomic reference (U.S. Patent No. 6,217,215). Applicants refer to the cited Figure 7 of the Tomic reference wherein if any two ribs are chosen which are immediately adjacent to either rib 578 or 579, these adjacent ribs cannot flex without flexing inwardly into at least one channel between the ribs. More specifically, ribs 578 and 580 are adjacent to rib 579, any flexing movement of rib 578 would impinge on at least one adjacent channel. Likewise, ribs 577 and 579 are adjacent to rib 578, any flexing movement of rib 579 would impinge on at least one adjacent channel.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that the presently pending claims are patentable over the Tomic reference.

The Examiner states “applicant has not stated that the choice of just one rib solves any relevant problem or is for a particular purpose and the closure mechanism of Tomic operates equally well.” In reply, it is respectfully submitted that the Applicants have stated that the

presently claimed invention achieves a balanced, tactile feel. See page 1, last three lines and page 2, lines 11 and 12.

For all of the reasons above, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are in immediate condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejections of the claims, to allow the claims, and to pass this application to early issue.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald Levy", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

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